

Purpose of Flashing Beacons

A School Zone Flashing Beacon (sometimes called flashers or flashing lights) is a pair of yellow lights that is installed with a 20-mph school zone speed limit sign. *The purpose of the flashing beacons is to draw motorists' attention to the reduced school zone speed limit sign.* In the mid-1990's, the City of San Antonio began installing school crossing flashing beacons on the approaches to some school zones.

Eligible Locations

The main objective of installing school related signage is to maximize the safety of the children arriving to and departing from school. Certain types of traffic control devices (signs and signals) can assist in meeting that objective.

A school advance sign, a reduced speed zone sign and a school crosswalk sign typically indicate designated school crosswalk locations.

Locations eligible for flashing beacon installation include all designated school crosswalk locations and all arterial and collector streets adjacent to schools.



Cost of Flashing Beacons

The cost of one pair of flashing beacon assemblies (one assembly for each direction of traffic) for a school zone is approximately \$14,000 per location. A significant number of school zones throughout the City are currently outfitted with flashing beacons. *The City is continuing to increase the number of school zones that are equipped with flashing beacons* through the use of locally generated revenues as well as federal funds.

Priority for Installation

The safest means for crossing a roadway is at an existing traffic signal. Under this condition children should be educated and directed to cross when the pedestrian signal displays the WALK symbol. Under these conditions, the cars that would be crossing the pedestrian's path are stopped at the red light. Similarly, where school children cross the street where the motorists encounter a stop sign, these cars have stopped and consequently provide the best opportunity for children to cross safely. For this reason, the priority for installation of school zone flashing beacons are *streets where the school children do not have a stop sign or traffic signal* providing this greater level of safety.

Motorist Behavior

The school zone flashing beacons are helpful in lowering the typical vehicular speed in school zones during the times when most children are arriving at or departing from school. However, these and other traffic control devices are only as effective as the drivers' willingness to cooperate. Consequently, *we urge motorists to comply with the speed limits within school zones.*

Parental Responsibility

When motorists fail to obey traffic laws regarding school zone traffic safety, the potential for a pedestrian accident increases. When a child is struck by a vehicle, the child may or may not be behaving in a safe manner. Whether the child was right or not, it is the child who suffers from the accident. Consequently, it is very important that children follow traffic safety rules as they travel to and from school and that *they watch out for cars*. Just as drivers are advised to "Drive Defensively", children and all pedestrians should be encouraged to "*Walk Defensively*."



Traffic Engineering Division
Department of Public Works
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

Phone (210) 207-7720
Fax (210) 224-5028

For City Service Call 311

February 2002

Public Works Department
City of San Antonio
P. O. Box 839966
San Antonio, TX 78283-3966

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*City of San Antonio
Department of Public Works*